(d) One third of the current year's allocation is placed at the disposal of the States/ Union Territories in advance for utilization against sanctioned works and subsequent installments are released on the basis of progress and actual expenditure on works.

Cess on cargo

1523. SHRI KANJIBHAI PATEL: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any proposal for levy of cess on all cargo handled in the country, is under consideration of Government;

(b) if so, the probable rates of cess on cargo;

(c) whether Government would like to consult the Maritime States before finalizing the policy; and

(d) if so, the manner in which the financial drain on State resources is proposed to be compensated?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T. R. BAALU): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Four-laning of NH-44

1524. SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of highways that have been undertaken to broaden and develop during the year 2007-08;

(b) the status of four-laning of the NH-44; and

(c) the targeted period to complete the four-laning of NH-44?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K. H. MUNIAPPA): (a) On 151 nos. of National Highways (NHs) improvement works including widening and strengthening were undertaken during the year 2007-08. The details are given in statement-I (*See* below)

(b) A total of 577 km. of NH-44 is envisaged to be 4-laned. Out of which, 252 km passing through the State of Meghalaya & Assam is envisaged to be 4 laned on Build, Operate and Transfer BOT (Toll) basis under National Highway Development Project-III (NHDP III). Remaining 325 km passing through the State of Tripura is envisaged to be 4 laned under Special Accelerated Road Development Programme for North-East phase-A (SARDP-NE Phase A) on Engineering, Procurement and Construction Contract (EPC) basis. The details of the projects are enclosed at statement II (*See* below) The Detailed Project Reports (DPR) are under preparation.

(c) SARDP-NE Phase A and NHDP III are targeted for completion in March, 2012 and December, 2013 respectively.